

Editorial Consultant's Note: As you can see from the length of this newsletter, Day Treatment Center has been a very busy place over the past months. Articles below will detail just what a hive of activity we have been with our art program, newly instituted wellness program, major fundraising efforts, and increased activities. And so I made the editorial decision to combine our Winter 2003 and Spring 2004 issues. (Or perhaps I should say that the decision was made for me by a very full schedule.) This has not been a season of reflection, as noted below in our essays on winter, but a season of doing! Read on, and you will see what I mean.

One of our highest goals in the Day Treatment Center is to provide a nurturing and safe environment that will enable our members to work their ways to richer and fuller lives. But when members choose to leave us for the "wider world," there is always a touch of sadness and loss. This was the case when one of our most active members, Fred DiDomenico, announced his intention to graduate from our program. Included in this newsletter are our letters to Fred and his response. We deeply miss his presence in the Center and will miss his thought-provoking contributions to the newsletter. But we are not without hope that he will favor us with future contributions and with his occasional presence. We will hold Fred in our thoughts and wish him all the very best in his myriad activities!

We are always happy to hear from our readers and welcome your comments!

Judith Moser, LSW

### The Evil Enemy

Daddy Warbucks was Little Orphan Annie's worst enemy. Whenever information came to him that she was in trouble, he would immediately go to her aid and relieve her of her difficulties. He didn't determine first whether she wanted help, and he didn't wait for her to ask. He simply solved her problems for her. In other words, he was a selfish person. He sated his own desire, which was to be the grandly giving daddy and ignored Little Orphan Annie's right to a life of her own.

To strongly or even mildly influence another person's life with good or evil intent without that person's permission or even knowledge is not to be generous, altruistic or good but to be selfish and harmful. To continue to direct and influence another person's life, to direct that life without that person's knowledge and even against his known feelings, or to lie and deceive him in order to direct his actions is to be that person's evil enemy.

This thought is better stated in Ibsen's A Doll House. In it, the wife rebels against being kept in the greatest safety and comfort in order to go out into the world and live in insecurity but in self-fulfillment. To give aid to someone who does not ask for it, to solve a person's problem without his knowledge, is to deny him his life, just as surely as the evil enemy in war denies a soldier his life. To live one's own life according to one's own beliefs, for better or worse, is to be fully alive and free. To be the recipient of unknown and unwanted direction and influence is to be a spiritual slave, an empty shell, a robot, a hollow mockery of what that person might have been.

### DTC Program News -----

Our thanks to Mrs. Barbara Travaglini for her support of the Day Treatment Center's weekly art program!



L. to R.: Darci Goldberg, Barbara Travaglini, Gary Devansky

On December 17, 2003, Coatesville VA Medical Center Director, Gary Devansky, presented an award to Mrs. Barbara Travaglini for her financial support of Day Treatment Center's weekly art program. Over the past year, through funds provided by the Gunard Berry Carlson Foundation, Day Treatment Center veterans have been provided with paper, pencils, watercolors, and pastels. In addition to art supplies, artist Terry De'Angelo from the Chester County Art Association in West Chester has given his time and instructional guidance as leader of the weekly art program. Terry has been very supportive and positive as he has shared his expertise. This Day Treatment Center activity stimulates our veterans' creative talents. What a wonderful sense of discovery as veterans surprise themselves with the results! We are grateful to Darci Goldberg, Director of the Chester County Art Association, for helping us develop the art program. And we are grateful to Mrs. Travaglini for turning the art program from wishful thinking to an actual weekly event. Thank you, Mrs. Travaglini. We enjoyed meeting you and showing you our masterpieces!

– Harriet Lahr



### DTC Program News -----



### Day Treatment Center members support the Pennsylvania Veterans Memorial

Prompted by a memorable fall outing to the Pennsylvania Veterans Memorial, DTC members voted to purchase a portion of a white granite cross in honor of past and present DTC members. In the near future, the cross will be engraved with our inscription and will take its place in a field of similar crosses. When we receive word that the cross has been inscribed, we will again visit the Memorial and see our legacy.

In past years, DTC members have supported charitable causes by participating in Toys for Tots campaigns, making Christmas visits to local day care centers (complete with Mr. and Mrs. Claus and toys for the children), and donating Thanksgiving turkeys to local food cupboards. This year's effort, the purchase of our cross, will support the Pennsylvania Veterans Memorial. Funds gained from the sale of these crosses are put toward maintenance of the beautiful memorial.

The decision to make this effort called for creative thinking. The financial outlay for the purchase (\$300) was more than we had ever attempted to raise for our previous charitable efforts. Putting our heads together and brainstorming means to raise this amount of money resulted in our exceeding our goal!

DTC members contributed to the passing of the hat. Several staff members baked delicious goodies for a bake sale; our thanks to Amber, Jean, Liz, and Vera for these! Judith organized DTC members to make tiny fresh green door decorations. Numerous local businesses contributed gifts to our fundraiser; we thank the Clay Lady, Studio Three, Eagle Gallery, Bacon's Tavern, Piscoglio's Flowers, the Coatesville Flower Shop, and Lighting by Design for the gifts! These gifts were later awarded to VAMC veterans, staff, and friends for their financial contributions (gifts and those receiving them are listed later in the newsletter). Christmas bell necklaces and bracelets were ordered for sales; thanks to Vera for this! Additional thanks to Tim and Liz for their hard work in keeping us organized! And to Harriet for her calm support! Even Santa Claus (thank you Stan Kastrava) made an appearance. Finally, but not least, our thanks go to the Veterans Canteen Service who graciously provided us a table in Times Square on December 12, 2003. There veterans and staff sold our wares to the Medical Center public and accepted contributions toward the numerous donated gifts.

Through all of these efforts, we succeeded in raising over \$740 for the purchase of our cross, well over our \$300 goal. The additional funds have been added to the Day Treatment Center treasury and will be used for scholarships for needy veterans to attend off-station trips and activities.

We are proud of our veterans and staff and pleased to contribute to the Veterans Memorial!

Judith Moser, LSW

### DTC Program News -----

### DTC begins Wellness Program

With "Wellness" as our goal, the Day Treatment Center has started a three-month program that will focus on developing healthy lifestyle choices. We plan to have some fun walking and exercising together, while learning about the impact of weight management. Our dietitian, Laura Sarmento, will help us look at the foods we eat and how they impact our bodies. We will also cover such topics as healthy snacking, portion control, label reading, food shopping, and food preparation. We guarantee members will have some fun and be inspired by our cheerleading squad. All DTC members are welcome to join, and there are prizes and incentives for all.

Vera Clift, RN

### Letters to Fred...

Dear Fred.

I thought I would write these few lines to let you know I have been thinking about you. We all miss you. Your resignation was sudden, but I understood. Yes, I understand. We hope to see you soon. Until then, keep smiling. I always found you to be an understanding individual



George

Dear Fred, My Fellow Veteran,

How are you? I hope this letter finds you in good spirits and good health. This letter is to let you know your presence is greatly missed. You vanished suddenly. I hope there was nothing said or done to upset you.

It was surprising because you left suddenly, without notice. I hope everything is fine physically and spiritually. I hope to see you again soon.

Your friend, Edward Norris

Dear Fred.

We already miss your wisdom. Please stop by sometime and let us know how you are doing. At any rate, it is your life, and you are the only one you can trust with your life.

Sincerely, John Adler Certainly you are missed, not only by our writing group, but by all the veterans in DTC. We miss your involvement in the activities in the Day Treatment Center. We trust that your new independent activities bring pleasure to you. Your empty chairs here in the writing group and in the Center seem more than empty without you there. Good luck as you change your life. We all wish you well. Drop by every once in a while and see us. Thank you.

#### Norm Fischer

Dear Fred,

I hope you feel good. You did good every day! I will miss you. Fred, the world is so bad. That's why it took you a long time to get well. Fred, I will really miss your being with us at the Medical Center. Good luck in everything you do, and may God bless you.

Miss you, Ed Beebe

Dear Fred,

This is a letter from Tammy, the social work intern. I missed coming last week due to a problem with my hip, and coming in today, I found out that you decided to move on from Day Treatment to do other things with your days. It made me sad to hear this, especially since I didn't get to see you before you left. I really hope that you plan to visit us now and then. Even though your gavel made a loud bang every time you hit the desk at the end of community meetings (that always made me jump!), I believe everyone misses that loud bang very much.

All everyone has talked about is how much you are missed, how much you have touched everyone here at the VA. I know I am going to miss your quiet and gentle wisdom and manner and your kind eyes. You are truly a gift of friendship for all those who can say they know you. I wish I had had more opportunities to speak with you. I am starting a group soon. It is going to be about stress management and life skills, fun exercises—things like music, funny movies, jokes, even planting something. I was hoping that you would have wanted to be a part of that group, because you would certainly have made it a lot of fun and very interesting.

Well, I hope you at least come visit and let us know how you are doing and what's going on in your new life. Everyone really wants to see you. Maybe you can visit once in a while. Let us know if you get another puppy!

#### Tammy Jabarin

Dear Fred,

The Day Treatment Center is not the same without you. Your presence has always been a solid, consistent part of the Day Treatment family. You provided leadership and wisdom that will forever be remembered by me and, I am sure, by your fellow veterans. It was always a pleasure to see you in the mornings, reporting to your "job" at the VA. When you entered the room, I knew it was time to get down to the business of starting our day.

I miss your ability to express your thoughts in writing group in an impeccably logical and organized manner. Your command of the language always impressed me, and your skills as computer scientist and researcher were without compare. You are a model for me of a person who is productive and accomplished.

You give me hope that growing is a continuing process and that I can grow wise as I grow. Thank you, Fred, for sharing your time with us, and please stay in touch.

#### Harriet Lahr

Dear Fred,

We are sitting around the table during writing group and have decided to take a bit of time to write and let you know how we have been affected by your decision to end your tenure in our Day Treatment Center activities.

First, I was shocked, for I had no idea that you had been thinking along these lines. Second, I was saddened, for I will very much miss your clearly thought out essays and contributions to the newsletter. I will also miss your presence in the Friday morning group and the straightforward feedback that you shared with other members when requested. I will miss the twinkle in your eye when someone said something funny. I will miss your intellectual honesty and willingness to struggle in your search for answers. I will miss your presence.

I know that, for you, an individual is a solitary being, free to move about and make decisions as he or she wishes. But I also believe that "No man is an island/No man stands alone." And so I feel that our group is diminished without you. Like it or not, you have found a place in the hearts of others—and in their lives.

I can certainly understand your wanting a change. We all need that. But I wish you had moved on gradually, if for no other reason than to help the rest of us adjust to your leaving.

All the best to you. I hope you will stay in touch. And do come back if ever you want to.

Judith Moser

### ...and Freds response...

Dear Judy:

First, please accept my sincere thanks for all that you have done for me in the past years and give my thanks to all the staff for the treatment I have gotten.

I think I have already made clear what my situation would be if it were not for the treatment I have gotten at Coatesville Med.

The letters from the writing group gave me a great sense of comradeship and security.

I'll probably see you all again soon since I have several continuing appointments at the Medical Center.

Be seeing you soon.

Fred



Writing is hard work. To make words convey to others the thoughts and feelings that you want to convey requires immense effort. Too often the first draft of a piece of writing carries thoughts and feelings a little different from what were intended, and the piece must be rewritten and rewritten again before it accurately reflects the writer's intent.

To accurately reflect his thought, the writer must have a pervasive knowledge of his readers. He must understand that, just as he must dig deep within himself to express himself, so also must the readers dig deep within themselves to interpret the writing through their own thoughts and

feelings. Consequently, it is almost mandatory that, if the writer wants to make himself understood, he must get out into the world and interact with as many people as possible.

Many people might think that fine, high quality writing can be done only by a few select people and understood by an equally select few. It seems as if a writer who intends that only a few should understand his work is missing the whole point of communicating, which is to reach as large an audience as possible.

#### - Fred DiDomenico

Writing is a good thing. To me, it is a form for communicating ideas and organizing thoughts. Communicating with others gives a pleasant feeling at times. But I think the opportunity and challenge of producing ideas in an organized way is a spectacular side effect of writing. I am always amazed at how centuries after a person has lived, we can still hear what he or she had to say so long ago. Writing, I think, in that sense can give one a sort of immortality; and the words can be absorbed by generations who never had the chance to hear what was said years before. Writing gives a voice to my ideas, but I do like the fact that I control what I write. Some of my best ideas are not expressed, and I like the ability to put forth or keep what I choose. It is always surprising that ideas do come when I start to write. In trying my skills in poetry, I find I start with an idea, first brainstorming words, and can put together something I think sounds good to the ear, and hopefully makes the reader feel whatever I am trying to express.

#### - Harriet Lahr

In college we learned about writing. We were told that a paragraph begins with a broad statement and ends with a specific statement, like an inverted cone. Since college I learned that good writing is done after researching a subject, deciding on a specific point of view, and letting what is needed explain that view. Being able to describe, one must be able to express feelings and actions in good diction. A good writer is not born, but made after trial and error, much study of grammar and sentence structure and how to make a good paragraph. All this is needed to become a good writer.

I don't have any difficulty writing about writing, although I haven't written anything for a long time. I like to write about things that affect me. I enjoy being with people, and I have a lot to say, but I don't know where to start. I should be able to write long letters and exchange thoughts and ideas.

- Frank Lilly

Writing certainly is good for the "brain power." I like to write about a subject, but it is something I do not do daily. While in the service, I wrote many letters, but I admit that today I do very little letter writing, or practically none. It's good to express oneself about a subject, and it would be good to occasionally write to someone, even if only to say hello.

I especially like this writing group because it gives me a chance to express myself and my feelings.

– Norm Fischer



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Nowadays friendship is equated with getting things. Objectives are acquired not through proving they are deserved but through friends who help the seeker to acquire.

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The lowest form of friendship is in politics, where friends enable those who want something to stretch, reinterpret, or avoid the law. For instance, a person who gets a traffic ticket might not act as prescribed by law, ethics, or principle, but according to whether he has a friend who knows a municipal official who will get the ticket fixed.

It is accepted today that things are acquired through friends. If one has many friends, he has power, the ability to achieve. If one insists on acquiring according to merit, one is at a disadvantage, because decisions are not made according to merit but on the basis of whether the applicant is a friend or a friend of a friend.

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It is believed that persons achieve self-fulfillment through interaction with other human beings, but there are those who believe real self-assertion comes through solitude. If a person is without friends, he is regarded as eccentric or unusual. But the loner achieves only through the quality of his work, not through friendship.

N

~ Fred DiDomenico

Friends are certainly welcome in our life. We look forward to friendship with others. It's nice to talk with them and share our experiences. Our family gatherings with friends are a joy. Without friends, life would not be the same. Friendship works both ways, both giving and accepting one another's feelings.

Friends come from all walks of life, and, hopefully, we remain friends for a long time, even if we don't see one another as often as we would like to.

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~ Norm Fischer

As a veteran here at the VA, it is difficult to speak out on the bonding of spirits that comes from a mutual situation. Whether good or bad, most bonding is a lesson. The good lessons last a lifetime. Because I was not in Vietnam and the horrors of war, I may have a different perspective, but through empathy I can reach out and often see the pain that these individuals had to suffer. With time and relating to other veterans on a day-to-day basis, I become more sensitive to their problems and ills.

Most of my friends were in active combat situations. As the widow of a Vietnam vet, I established a lifetime of connection. Not all of our vets could just pick up the pieces and get on with life, but many have. Some are in wheelchairs, some walk with canes, but deep within themselves, they had the drive to make their mark on society.

As a peacetime veteran, I can only say to my fellow vets, male and female, "Thanks, folks. You were there when we needed you, and because of your commitment, you have helped keep us free from terrorism and tyranny. Where ever you are, and whatever you did, words cannot express the heartfelt feelings I have for all of you—my friends."

~ Judy Perdue

Since I can't say I have many enemies, I would say that I have quite a number of friends. I usually consider a person my friend if he is kind and good hearted toward me. I try to be a good friend to everyone.

~ George Lee

"A good man is hard to find." You can be a friend to someone, but that person may not always be your friend. Children need friends, especially in their parents. A parent can talk to his child instead of punishing him. Children need guidance, and parents should always (like a good friend) tell their child the truth so the child can trust them. A good parent knows when to say no, and the child is entitled to an explanation. In this way, parents can become their child's friend.

~ John Adler

"There are steamships and towships, but the best ships are friendships." That is an old autograph book message that I remember from long ago. Maybe not exactly, but you get the idea. I think friendships are part of what makes life worthwhile. Being able to share time or a laugh or two with someone makes me feel good and keeps me mindful of the good things in life. "Friends are funny, friends are nice. They add to life a little spice."

~ Harriet Lahr

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# November



The month of November is a beautiful month with the leaves changing colors and falling from the trees. It brings fond memories of past Thanksgivings and family dinners. It is moderately cold, but we still have some warm days. It is also considered the beginning of winter and the holiday season. I particularly like the changing seasons, even the snowfalls and cold weather, sitting by the fireplace and watching the glowing flames.

#### Norm Fischer

November is the month of decision. October has lingering aspects of summer in that there are warm and balmy days. December is definitely winter, with cold and snow sometimes, but November is the month in which the season definitely becomes winter.

Commercially, it is also the month of introduction to economic stimulus. Halloween sales occur at the very end of October, practically the beginning of November. Halloween is a heavy sales holiday for the merchants. Then, at the end of November, comes another heavy sales day—Black Friday. Thanksgiving itself is preparatory for the commercial activity season of the year—Christmas.

These three aspects of November—the seasonal change, the holidays, and the heightened commercial activity—make it one of the most notable months of the year.

Perhaps there is another aspect—that of the human adjustment to the season. Humans are just beginning to accept, in November, the need to change to heavier clothing, the necessity for heat in the home, and the beginning of winter's expenses. There is also the need for reserve finances for the extra expenses of winter.

#### Fred DiDomenico

November is a somber time, and the days are quite short. It is the month that treats us with a food feast towards its end, thus beginning the Christmas season. There is also a general election every year during November, and it is held on the first Tuesday of the month, except when the first Tuesday falls on the first of the month. But November isn't a favorite month for persons like Barry Manilow, who composed "Oh! How I hate to see October go." I apologize to anyone born in this month!!!

#### John Adler

There are twelve months in the year, and November is the eleventh. I've never really thought too much about November until now. This is the time of year for Thanksgiving.

George Lee

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I really love people who take a firm stand for their principles. I believe hippies of the Vietnam War era were better people because they did not do the easy thing and follow the crowd. Nowadays, I think that most people will go along with anything. They just don't care until the problems hit them personally. We all need to believe in something. I really love people who love!

#### - John Adler

I really love to watch my favorite television shows. Jeopardy, for one, and Wheel of Fortune. I also love to sit on the beach and talk to people I haven't seen for a while. I also love to go to our family's gatherings, like Thanksgiving and Christmas. At Christmas, I love to watch my family open their gifts and hear their comments and expressions. As they say, "Life is just a bowl of cherries." Love it or enjoy it, it's all the same.

#### – Norm Fischer

I really love it when an instrument or a plan works satisfactorily. There is always a pervasive sense of malaise when something does not work properly. The malfunction causes everything to seem to be malfunctioning. The sun does not seem to be shining brightly, the weather is gloomy, and the sense of well being is gone. Until the malfunction is reversed, there is a feeling of dislocation, as though everything is awry.

When the defect is repaired, when the plans mature, there comes a sense of deep satisfaction and well being. Everything seems to be right again, and the sun is shining. People require a sense of order and the rightness of things. Such a sense is the basis of a life and evolves into a knowledge of good and evil. When there is evil afoot, it is paralleled by a general feeling of illness throughout the community. Drug dealers and crimes in the community, even among those not immediately affected by them, cause a sense of malfunction and weightness. When the police clean out the community, there comes a sense of lightness, as if a weight has been lifted from people's hearts.

#### - Fred DiDomenico

I really love spending time with my family who are close to me geographically and those who are far away. I love spending time at home drawing or reading or doing puzzles. I love being alone. I love the fact that my family is always near, by telephone or for visits. I love it when they visit me and I can show them some of my favorite places and drive through Amish country, checking out the acres of corn, green grass, and open spaces with streams and cows lounging in the fields. I love it when I go to visit the city where I grew up and get to ride to the downtown area. I love to see my sister's grandkids and the progression of a young generation full of hope and anticipation. I love knowing that I can return to my own little piece of the planet, kick back, and enjoy the experience of life. I love being alive!

– Harriet Lahr

# **Martin Luther King**

(written January 15, 2004 in honor of Dr. King's birthday)

I have heard so much about this man. He was a brave man. Above all things, he led many demonstrations on civil rights. He had a very clear voice and was very outspoken. He was of a very neat stature. He was very handsome. When he spoke, everything seemed to stand still. I could see this on films of him.

#### George Lee

Martin Luther King was a good role model for someone growing up in that time. He challenged people to not accept stereotypes and to look beyond them, to get to know a person as an individual. When I was in high school, I read Soul on Ice, which challenged me to look at society and what it could do to people. As an immigrant to this country from Wales, I brought a different perspective to my view of life in the U.S. (or to a small part of Philadelphia and a small town in New Jersey). I joined the Army and volunteered for Vietnam and came back the day Dr. King was killed. Somehow he did not agree with the view that the media was showing about what we were fighting for. Since that time, I have stopped watching t.v. and try to form my own opinions. This is what Dr. King taught.

#### Peter T. Evans

"Free at last, free at last, thank God almighty, I'm free at last," just one of Dr. King's familiar speeches. It was a slow day back in 1968. I was at home with nothing to do, when the story broke through on the radio that Martin Luther King had been assassinated. It struck me that this was not surprising. I mean that, in a funny sort of way, his death was kind of expected. It was in the back of everyone's mind. His life was always in danger, being a civil rights leader during that period of time. Dr. King was a leader of an important struggle in trying to free the rights of the black man. It was alright for the black man to clean, change tires, or mechanically repair the bus, but during that period, he supposed to ride in the back of the bus. My family was very well educated and taught us a lot about civil rights and the work of the NAACP, so we were well armed. Even though his death was expected, it made no sense.

#### Walter Watts

Thoughts of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr... I always think of my mother when I think of him, because she always used to say he looked physically like my sister's husband. And I think he did, too. It also helps me to remember that he is not merely a legend or a civil rights hero, but also a man...a man set apart from others by his deeds and actions. He chose to voice his opinions and thoughts, but he did what anyone of us as human beings could do. He made a difference in my life because he was a man who spoke out. He was a well educated man, and in my family education is just about the most important thing you can do for yourself. I am glad that there is a national holiday dedicated to him because that will help keep generations aware of his efforts and the example he set. We, as a nation, can remember, and as long as we have that one day each year, his actions can be remembered and thought of by generations who never heard him speak or saw him walk on this earth. The fact that there is a legacy will keep us aware that one man can make a difference. I've heard it said that a person is not really dead so long as there is someone alive who remembers him.

Dr. King's life and death is that of the committed man. He gave his life both living and dying to the equality of all humans. Aside from what he believed is the fact that he was totally committed to his cause. He preached, was an activist, and worked for his beliefs. He thought of nothing but his hopes for humanity. This is the highest type of man.

Too many, the greatest number of humans, live their lives wandering off into what tempts them in the moment, living lives of inconsistency and hypocrisy. Thus, by not testing themselves, they never get to know themselves.

What makes a person live for one idea? Perhaps it is the physiological structure of his body that directs his mind and emotions in one direction. Others who live their lives going always from pillar to post are not constructed with the bodily means of following one path.

#### Fred DiDomenico

Martin Luther King is a legend to me since I was not born before he died, yet I know a lot of people who remember him and his work. To me he was a selfless man, devoting his life to creating change, a change long overdue. I believe he was one of the few individuals at that time who were born to create awareness of human suffering and the need for unity and mutual respect. Both Kennedys, Malcolm X, and other individuals who died before their times...all delivering messages of peace, all in different packages. Dr. King's message was the greatest, I believe, because he asked for nothing and suffered greatly in his personal life. He helped move hundreds of thousands of people to demonstrate and voice their beliefs in peaceful and respectful ways. I know there were many other individuals also responsible for creating the movement, but his oratory skills, charismatic nature, and openheartedness helped fuel the fire of the movement. He was the Ghandi of the 60s and used many of Ghandi's ways to effect positive changes in society. I wonder what would have happened had he lived, if the Kennedys had lived, if Malcolm X had lived. Why have all the great leaders of our time (and other times) been cut down before their missions were finished? Maybe it is God's way of reminding us how human we are, how much we still have to learn, how we remember tragedies more than happy endings. It seems that all the great ones have died early, so we cannot forget their missions and messages. Dr. King was just beginning, and I can only imagine the world we would have today if he had lived to be 75. 75 is a common age to reach today, even to be healthy and active for most people. What a leader he would be still! I sometimes wish I had been born during my mother's time, in the 50s, so I could have experienced firsthand all the historical events that were shaping our country though those times. Especially as a social worker-in-training, I realize that Dr. King's work lies at the heart of the values of the profession, and my personal beliefs are in line with those values. I hope to carry on his work, even if it is in a small way, as a human being and as a professional, throughout my life.

Tammy Jabarin

### JANUARY

The relevance of the month of January depends on the geographical area a person lives in. As everyone knows, the world is spherical. There are many different climatic conditions, depending on where a person lives. In the northern hemisphere, we are in the first full month of winter, whereas in the southern hemisphere, January is the first month of summer. This fact allows us to perceive weather on a global scale, depending on the hemisphere we live in. The earth rotates on its axis, and the Artic and Antarctic Circles are the focal points of the axis; they are the coldest places on earth. The equator has a tropical climate, and temperatures can rise quite high but are warm throughout the year. So January's climate varies.

#### Audie Curtis Brown

January is the beginning of a whole new year, a whole new opportunity to do things a little better. It is a new and refreshing time of the year when the weather is as cold as it can be here in the State of Pennsylvania. One fact of life for me is that when January comes, I am another year older and wiser. I am grateful for each year when I can be here to say, "I made it." I think of people who did not. January is the time to start planning for the seasons that follow. January leads to February, and my thoughts turn to groundhogs and hopes of early spring. January has some of the most spectacular sunrises and sunsets. One evening last week the setting sun put a bright red tone outside my window. The snows in January can be a real pain when I have to go to work, but the snow on the grass and pine trees creates a scene that is breathtaking. And there are always the snowmen. My specialty is the triangular shaped one with rocks shaped into a smile and sticks for arms and an old baseball cap and scarf. I have tons of pictures of these sorry looking characters, but I do enjoy making them. I send the pictures every year to my brother in Georgia. I am not a cold-weather person. I prefer August weather, but since January is my birthday month, I have as good time a time as I can with all that January has to offer.

#### Harriet Lahr

January is a cold month, and after the holidays, life gets back to a more normal routine. People are back to work after taking vacation days. The start of the new year is bright, and another year has passed into remembrance. We think of spring and summer and all the things we hope to do in the coming year. We get out the new calendar. Yes, It is like starting anew. We mustn't forget our New Year's resolutions. Even though thoughts of the new year are refreshing, it's also time to think of the pleasures of the past.

#### Norm Fischer

January is the first month of the new year. Most days are very cold, and sometimes it snows. It's the time of starting again, but it's not a month with many holidays. Yes, you really feel the breeze in January.

#### George Lee

The month of January brings a recovery from the exhilaration of the Thanksgiving-Christmas season. Immediately following New Year's Day, there comes a relaxation or feeling that we are no longer required to live up

to the values of the holiday season, primarily the dictum that buying and spending are mandatory.

It is the month of inventory. With computers making the need for taking commercial inventory no longer necessary, the need for emotional and spiritual inventory still remains. January is the month when the habits, the attitudes, the outlook of the previous year are held in abeyance and examined. The resolve to adopt new ones is no longer in vogue, but the gloominess of the weather induces this frame of mind. It is the month of introspection when people examine their mental condition and either accept it or resolve to change. The weather is a large part of the self-examination. The general cloudiness causes the weighing of internal attitudes, while the few sunny days create a diversion.



Fred DiDomenico

# DTC Events and Outings

#### National Constitution Center and Reading Terminal Market

On January 7, 2004 ten veterans participated in the Day Treatment Center outing to the National Constitution Center and Reading Terminal Market.

The Center's goal is to reconnect people to their constitutional heritage, to inspire citizens to become more knowledgeable about the Constitution, and to demonstrate how the Constitution is the foundation of American law and society.

After our tour of the Center, we walked six blocks down Race Street to the Reading Terminal Market for lunch and a walk around. The Market is one of America's largest and oldest farmers' markets, housed since 1893 in the same National Historic Landmark building. The Market offers an incredible selection of farm fresh produce, meat and poultry, fine seafoods, cheeses, baked goods, flowers, kitchenware, cookbooks, jewelry, and crafts. Veterans and staff sampled their tempting array of dining choices.

Tim Sessions, LSW

#### Shady Maple Smorgasbord

On Wednesday, January 21, 2004 sixteen (yes, sixteen!) veterans attended an outing to Shady Maple Smorgasbord. We needed two vans to transport everyone! Everyone reported having enough to eat, chosen from the hundreds of items available. Many toured the fine gift shop in the basement, and some of us bought souvenirs. Veterans enjoyed the trip so much that they were still talking about it the next day. Next time we will be sure to reserve the tour bus to transport us!

Tim Sessions, LSW

#### **Holiday Party**

On December 23, 2003 DTC members were joined by veterans living independently and in outlying CRC homes to celebrate the holiday season at the annual Case Management holiday party. Hosted by our own CVAMC firemen, the party was in full swing by 11:30 a.m. with our usual delicious traditional Christmas dinner with all the trimmings. The firemen and their families were busy the night before the party, roasting turkeys and baking hams.

On the day of the party, the fire truck pulled up outside the DTC, carrying our hosts, and they busied themselves preparing mashed potato filling, green bean casserole, candied sweets, and relish trays. They bustled back and forth from the dining hall's kitchen, where the food was heated (thank you, Mr. Wetterlin!), then went to work filling veterans' plates with heaping servings. This year we also enjoyed special ethnic foods prepared by staff and CRC sponsors (stuffed cabbages, pizza, greens, to name a few). Did I mention that the firemen also cleaned up after themselves? Many, many thanks to our special friends, our CVAMC firemen for their hard work and generosity. Our gratitude also goes to recreation therapist Krista Lewis, who spent hours shopping for the basics, provided our fancy table settings, and marshaled us together. When all was spic and span and the party was over, our big fire truck headed down to the City Gate shelter with mounds of leftovers to extend our cheer for their evening meal.

A special guest at this year's party was Vince Fiola from the Pennsylvania Veterans Memorial, and we were able to inform him that we had well exceeded our goal to purchase a cruciform at the Memorial in honor of DTC veterans (see article above). Vince brought handmade holiday cards from elementary school children in his area and distributed them to all the veterans.

The party left all with full tummies and warm hearts.

Judith Moser, LSW

#### **Christmas Shopping Spree**

On Friday, December 5, 2003, Day Treatment Center veterans, accompanied by Harriet Lahr and Barbara Martinez, went on a pre-Christmas shopping trip to the Vanity Fair Outlet stores in Reading, PA. Armed with shopping lists and empty stomachs, the vets took the shopping area by storm. An assortment of specialty stores, including clothing, leather goods, housewares, toys, and books, held perfect gifts for family and friends. A popular spot at the shopping mall where vets gathered (near the lunch hour) was the huge food court. Massive servings of hamburgers, steak sandwiches, Chinese and Italian and Greek cuisine, chicken, ice cream cones, and baked goods were consumed. Shopping does create a healthy appetite! The trip was a great success and has become an annual pre-Christmas DTC event.

Harriet Lahr, CA-C

#### Dinner and a Movie, Anyone?

During the past few months, members of the Day Treatment community, along with Jean Stipe, RN case manager, and Liz Betterley, LCSW, social work case manager, have been spending some quality time together in the evenings. The group, which consists of many "regulars," has gone to late afternoon movies and on to dinners at either Old Country Buffet or the Cracker Barrel restaurant.

So far, the film crew has viewed Denzel Washington in Radio (a favorite of many of the vets) and Russell Crowe in Master and Commander. At Christmas time we tried to see Elf. However, on this occasion veterans and staff had to punt since the movie theater was closed due to electrical problems. We opted for bowling at the nearby Bowling Palace. This was enjoyed by all, and several veterans expressed interest in more bowling trips.

Jean Stipe, RN

#### **Compeer Bowling and Pizza Party**

Members of the Day Treatment community attended a wonderful bowling outing in January at the Bowling Palace in Downingtown with members of the Chester County Compeer program. The trip was sponsored by Compeer and brought together nonveteran Chester County mental health consumers with our veterans. A bargain,

the trip included two games of bowling as well as pizza and sodas for only \$5! There are many talented bowlers in our group, and the trip showcased their talents. It was enjoyed by all!

Jean Stipe, RN

#### **Day Treatment Center Rocks!**

On Thursday, February 12, DTC member Winston Nichols performed a drum concert in the Center. Winston has been drumming since before the age of twelve. He says his mother supported his love of "drumming on everything and anything." Winston's mother felt that energy and time spent on drums kept him "out of trouble." His natural instinct to beat out rhythm on boxes and bongos led him to make his own drum set from boxes. He purchased his very first drum set at a Sears store. In school, Winston joined the stage band, and at the T. C. Williams High School in Alexandria, Virginia, he was part of a group of five who played instruments. Winston and the group also were in several talent shows in Washington, DC and Virginia, sometimes coming in first place for their efforts. After high school, the band members went their separate ways, and Winston joined the service. Winston's skills as a drummer are very impressive, and many of his fellow veterans were surprised to learn he possessed such musical skills. Thank you, Winston, for sharing!

Harriet Lahr, CA-C



# Interview with Staff Member

Tudith Moser, LSW

(Interviewed by John Adler, DTC member, and Tammy Jabarin, SW Intern)

Having put off her own interview long enough, Judith took the plunge and agreed to share her story in this issue. She has worked part time in the Day Treatment Center and Community Residential Care since 1991, long before these programs were gathered together with the MHICM and case management programs. In previous employment here at CVAMC, she worked in the Alzheimer's program in 1990 and for five years during the 1970s on Ward 58, then (as now) a psychiatric admissions unit.

Judith was born in Wilmington, Delaware and moved with her parents, both psychiatric nurses here at CVAMC, to Coatesville when she was five. She grew up only a mile away from the Medical Center! She was blessed with having her maternal grandparents living with her family, which made being an only child a little less lonely. And her pets kept her busy. Her parents bred and raised five litters of cocker spaniel puppies, and caring for them helped her learn to be responsible. She loved living in the country, playing in the woods, riding horses, and playing baseball with the boys.

She attended Coatesville schools and commuted to West Chester University during her freshman year so that she could continue riding her horse. But college life called, and she moved to the dorms for the rest of her college years. She graduated with a Bachelor's degree in English Literature. Her affiliation with West Chester University continued, and she completed a Master's in English Literature before returning yet again to complete a Master's in Social Work just three years ago. Judith loves to study and learn, and she is currently a second-year student in the three-year gestalt therapy training program at the Pennsylvania Gestalt Center.

In addition to her work here at CVAMC, Judith taught freshman level English composition courses at Lincoln University and Delaware County Community College for several years. In spite of her love for teaching and students, she felt her calling was in social work, which led to her return to CVAMC in 1991.

Judith has been married for 29 years to Joe, a mathematics professor at (you guessed it) West Chester University. They have three daughters and a son, all married, with three granddaughters in Chester County and one granddaughter in Pasadena, California. Judith and Joe love spending time with their family but regret that three of their children are now living on the West Coast. Traveling is a must in their family!

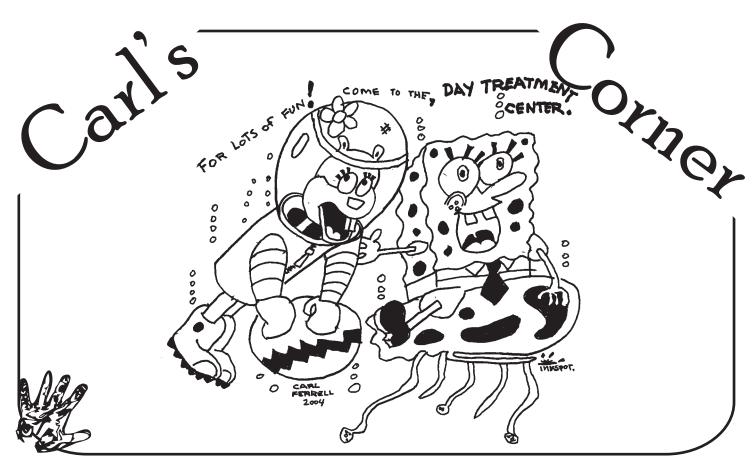
She has many favorite activities. She studied voice for many years, performed in all of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas with the Gilbert and Sullivan Society of Chester County, and sang with their road show troupe at many venues throughout Chester County. She also performed with them in their award-winning production of "Trial By Jury" at the International Gilbert and Sullivan Festival here in Philadelphia.

Her other loves include watching movies (favorite movie is Fanny and Alexander), reading, listening to opera and classical music, dancing to rock and roll, walking, playing cribbage, reading, gardening, eating pasta, and traveling (England and Europe)! She's never bored.

Here in DTC, Judith is group leader for the Friday morning therapy group and the writing group. She works as case manager for eleven veterans and also serves as the social worker for the Community Residential Care team. Over the years she has particularly enjoyed producing Mail Call (combining her interests in writing, therapy, and writing-as-therapy) and helping to coordinate the DTC Christmas party with the CVAMC firemen. And this year's fundraising effort for the Pennsylvania Veterans' Memorial has been a special joy! Also this year she became a field instructor for SW intern, Tammy Jabarin, a student from (where else?) West Chester University.

Her advice for future case managers? Love what you do for a living, keep a sense of humor, work hard, be flexible, and do your best!

#### Tammy Jabarin



### Can You Add My Life to Your Love?

David Babb

Can you add my life to your love? With every breath that fails death, I am a captive of your love.

In love's sweet capture am I of you. Whereupon your voice I linger, And my heart your life, Your smile upon my memory, And your rhythm upon my heart.

When in the course of loving you, I learn to be humble and caring.

### **The Old Blacksmith Shop in Elverson** *Judy Purdue*

The pied piper of Elverson lived in style
Even though it was just for a while.
The birds sang all year round
From the break of dawn 'til the end of day.
No one could say that the place was evil
Because the rats of Elverson believed it livable.
When the time came to leave it behind,
It was soon learned to be that the rats were kind.
No one would have thought the place so clean.
When the lady of the house, who was not mean,
Shared her food with all about—
The critters within and the critters without.

The critters within and the critters without.

To be sure, the pied piper traveled all over town And was told (in the past) to be a bit of a clown. When the pied piper had to get ready to leave, The critters came in and began to bereave.

Two exits it took to find their division,

The rats came in and made their decision.

They died in the wall,

And the pied piper cleaned up them all.

Lovingly, she respected them all!

"Respect all life."

Love is...

Joseph Cassebaum

Love is the gentle touches of two branches That sway together in the gentle breeze. It is the way the flowers on a dogwood tree Brush together in the sunlight.

Love is the loving grasp of fingers locked Together as you walk through a warm Summer rain, together, step by step.

Love is also the darkness of each other's Soul as you lie awake at night in bed, After an argument.

Love is the gentleness felt between you As the water droplets spring from the shower. It is the wiping down of each other's body After a swim in the ocean of life.

Love is the reaching out into the darkness To make sure your mate is resting and safe.

Love takes you to heights unknown
And lets you fall gently to the ground.
It makes you dizzy with delight
And lets you laugh together at situations in your lives.

Love can fulfill your dreams Even as you lie asleep, Resting in the quietness and darkness That surrounds you.

Love must have its spaces even as The trees grow separately in the forest. Love together but make not each other Prisoners of the life you share.

Never give up on the hope of love's future.

Love yourselves even as God loves You and all your humanness.

Poetry Corner

# Gift Recipients of Our Fundraising Efforts for the Pennsylvania Veterans Memorial Cruciform

We are very grateful for the contributions made by Medical Center veterans, staff, and friends toward our fundraising efforts to purchase the cruciform. Listed below are gift recipients and contributors.

Gift	Contributor	Recipient
Severson print	Eagle Gallery	Rudy Creekmur
Framed mirror	Studio Three	Janet Leathem
Necklace and bracelet	Clay Lady	Sue Race
Stuffed tiger	Anonymous	Sue Race
\$25 gift certificate	Bacon's Tavern	Sharon McCreary
4 silver gift boxes	Rittenhouse Lighting	Bob Dorsey
4 silver gift boxes	Rittenhouse Lighting	Pam Hoffman-Kohl
3 woodland elves	Rittenhouse Lighting	Mike Race
Large elf	Rittenhouse Lighting	Mike Race
11 tree ornaments	Rittenhouse Lighting	Stan Kastrava
3 gourd Santas	Rittenhouse Lighting	Glenn Perr
Elf in a bag	Rittenhouse Lighting	Karen Woodall
3 reindeer	Rittenhouse Lighting	Tom Middleton
2 snowman heads	Rittenhouse Lighting	Victoria Robinson
Deer sign	Rittenhouse Lighting	Claudia Hiddell
Welcome sign	Rittenhouse Lighting	Scott Higgins
Welcome sign	Rittenhouse Lighting	Ernie Perella
Gift Box	Rittenhouse Lighting	Debbie Zimmerman
Metal wreath	Rittenhouse Lighting	Ernie Perella
Metal wreath	Rittenhouse Lighting	Janice Bruce
Metal wreath	Rittenhouse Lighting	Lynne Debiak
Gift basket	Piscoglio's Flowers	Ernie Perella
\$10 gift certificate	Coatesville Flower Shop	Mike Race
\$10 gift certificate	Coatesville Flower Shop	Dawn Martin

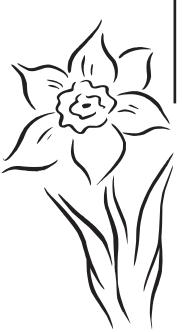
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## Day Treatment Center Mission Statement

The CVAMC Day Treatment Center seeks to provide a supportive, therapeutic milieu for outpatient veterans who are coping with mental illness and/or substance abuse issues. The program works to assist veterans to attain their highest level of functioning in interpersonal relationships and in their communities.



## Inside this issue of Mail Call: Winter 2003/Spring 2004

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